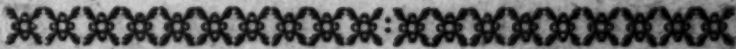


Female Rights vindicated;

OR THE

EQUALITY of the SEXES

MORALLY and PHYSICALLY proved.



C.
Female Rights vindicated;

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OF THE

SEXES

MORALLY and PHYSICALLY proved.

By a LADY. K



L O N D O N :

Printed for G. BURNET, at Bishop *Burnet's*
Head, without *Temple-Bar*.

MDCCLVIII.

Female Rights vindicated;

OR THE

EQUALITY

OF THE

SEXES

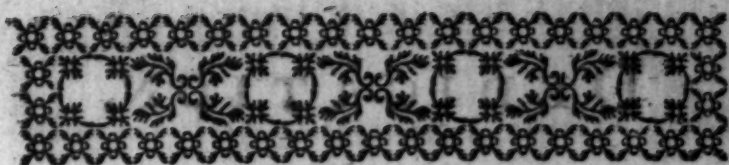
MOORE'S AND HARRIS'S NOVEL.



LONDON:

Printed for G. B. Harrington, at the British Museum.

MDCCLXXIII.



TO THE
NOBLE, VIRTUOUS, COURAGEOUS,
MAGNANIMOUS, LEARNED

LADIES
OF
Great-Britain and Ireland.

LADIES,

 S you are the natural Patroneſſes
of this Work, I
ſhall make no Apology for
laying it at your Feet,
and

DEDICATION.

and imploring your Protection.

ALL Panegyric upon your Virtues and Qualifications are needless here, as the greatest Proof of your possessing them, is your Resolution of heroically supporting your Pretensions and Claim to them.

THE sycophantic Flattery of Dedicators is entirely

DEDICATION.

tirely laid aside ; here are nothing but simple Truth and plain Honesty to attract your Approbation ; but then your Interest is so immediately connected with the Success of this Work, that by letting it remain in Obscurity, you give up all Title to a Competition with the Men in Learning, Sense, and Fame.

*

2

I have

DEDICATION.

I HAVE rushed forth
Champion of your Cause,
without Subsidies—without
Succours — with scarce a
Troop of well mustered
Ideas I have taken the
field, and (I flatter myself)
have gain'd such Advan-
tages over the Enemy,
that, if you will but pro-
perly second my Efforts,
they will not have a single
Fortress left in all the Ex-
tent of *Superiority*.

To

DEDICATION.

To quit the Figure, upon You, LADIES, it depends ; to recover your usurped Rights and Possessions ; to regain your just and natural Authority. In order to succeed, you must strenuously support the Doctrine of this Piece, and the Rectitude of its Maxims ; which are neither opposite to Nature, Reason, or Experience, but coincide with all.

DEDICATION.

IT were needless to add
more to recommend this
Work to your Patronage,
which it so justly claims.
I am, with a thorough
Sense of your Merit,

LADIES,

*Your most obedient,
and most devoted Servant,*

The AUTHORESS.

P R E-



PREFACE.

THE Novelty and Daringness of this Performance cannot avoid drawing upon me the Attention of the Female World, and the Criticisms of the Male. To endeavour refuting an Opinion of so long standing as that of *the Superiority of the Men over the Women*, with respect

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spect to Genius and Abilities, must appear to many a strange and impracticable Attempt; and Numbers, even of Women, misled by Prejudice and Custom, may believe no one would be so *Quixotic* as to list herself Champion of the Sex upon this Occasion; and that therefore this is nothing more than a ludicrous Performance, to turn the Women into greater Ridicule, and make them appear more contemptible than ever. But this is far from being the Case. A serious Address to Reason and good Sense, a thorough Disquisition of the Source and Progress of that Empire the Men have assumed over us, and the Cause
of

P R E F A C E.

of our present State of Subjection, with moral and physical Reasons to prove our natural Equality with the Men in every Thing, are what compose the Substance of the following Sheets.

IT is true, that to arrive at this, two powerful Adversaries must be subdued; the *Vulgar*, and almost all the *Learned*. But the first having no other Foundation for their Opinion than *Custom* and *slight Appearances*, it is easily refuted by pointing out in what Manner the Sex were reduced to the State of Dependence we now see them in, and thereby excluded an Acquaintance with the Sciences and
a Par-

P R E F A C E.

a Participation of Places of Emolument. That their natural Genius is suited for receiving any Knowledge, and their Abilities for filling any Employment.

THE Sentiments of the Learned must necessarily succumb where they oppose Truth and Reason, which are the only Champions in this Cause: They combat against Custom, Prejudice, and long Prescription; formidable Opponents, it is true, yet Impartiality will always adjudge them the Laurel.

HOWEVER extraordinary such a Decision may appear, if we recur to History we shall not be surprised

P R E F A C E.

surprised that the Sex should contend with the Men for Virtue, Valour, Learning, Prudence, Patriotism, or any of the most shining Ornaments the latter can lay claim to.

THE *Amazons*, who were Natives of *Scythia*, having lost their Husbands in War, took up Arms, and demonstrated the greatest Valour and Heroism in possessing themselves of *Asia*, where they built the City of *Ephesus*: *Hercules* and *Theseus* declared War against them and defeated them; but this Defeat tended more to their Glory than their former Conquests; for after having made a great and courageous Resistance

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Resistance against those famous Heroes, they were taken Prisoners, when they killed their Centinels who guarded them, and made their Escape. *Strabo* and *Palæphatus*, indeed, deny there ever was such a People; but we have the Authority of *Pliny* and *Pomponius Mela*, who assert, that in *Scythia* the Women govern'd, who were called *Amazons*. *Iustin* has particularly treated of them in his History, and several creditable Authors agree that they burnt their left Breasts in order to use their Bow with greater Facility; that they made War against *Priam*, whom they afterwards succoured at the Siege of *Troy*; that they made an Incurfion

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Incurſion into *Attica* to avenge the carrying off of their Queen by *Theſeus* ; that the Name of their capital City was *Themifcyra* in *Cappadocia*, ſeated near the famous River *Thermodon*. The City of *Ephesus*, with the Temple of *Diana*, the Cities of *Smyrna*, *Thiatyria*, *Cumea*, and *Magneſia*, were founded by theſe celebrated warlike Women.

MODERN Historians tell us, that upon the *Caucasus* there are People among whom are great Numbers of female Warriors, who make Incurſions in *Muscovy*, and wage War againſt the *Calmucks*. That to this Day there is a Kingdom in *Africa*

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com-

P R E F A C E.

composed of nothing but Women, who kill all the Boys they bring forth, and train up their Girls to military Exploits.

BUT to dwell no longer upon historical Authorities that admit of the least Doubt, there are Heroines which all Writers, both moral and profane, agree to have existed. Amongst these is *Judith*, the Wife of an obscure Man, who delivered the City of *Bethulia* when besieged, and preserved her fellow Citizens from impending Ruin. This is her Story. Whilst the City was attacked by *Holofernes*, General of King *Nabuchodonosor's* Army, she went gayly

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gayly drest into the Enemies Camp, pretending she flew there for Refuge; a few Days after, *Holofernes* being smote with her Beauty, order'd her to be brought into his Tent to satisfy his lustful Appetite; but having upon this Occasion drank more freely than usual, she profited of the Opportunity to cut off his Head, and return'd the same Night with it into the City, where she exhorted her fellow Citizens to make a Sally upon the Enemy, which was immediately resolved upon and executed, when the Besiegers, greatly intimidated at the unexpected Death of their Leader, flew before the *Jews* on every Side.

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THE Prophetess *Deborah*, who was esteemed more courageous than any Man of her Time, defeated with *Barack* the *Chanaanians* conducted by *Sisara*, and thereby deliver'd the People of *Israel* from the State of Servitude, in which they had been upwards of twenty Years. *Jael* another Woman, participated also of this Glory.

Jephtha being upon the Point of giving the Enemy Battle, made a Vow to sacrifice whatever came first in his Way, if he returned victorious; having gained the Battle, his only Daughter was the first Person he met upon

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upon his Return, who came to congratulate him, upon his Victory; resolved to fulfil his Vow, he did not spare her; and this innocent Victim, far from being displeased at his Severity, exhorted him to accomplish his Oath, asking only two Months to prepare herself, when she appear'd, and her Father sacrificed her.

Clelia, a Roman young Lady, who was given as an Hostage to the *Tuscans*, when *Porfena* attempted to re-establish the *Tarquins* upon the Throne, having put herself at the Head of a Troop of other Girls, cheated her Guard and swam a-cross the

P R E F A C E.

Tiber, though fired upon on every Side by the Enemy.

Porcia, Daughter of *Cato*, and Wife to *Brutus*, upon hearing of her Husband's Death, heroically resolved not to survive him, and killed himself by swallowing of burning Coals.

Odenatus, King of *Palmyra*, took up Arms in Favour of *Gallienus* against *Macrinus*, who had revolted in the East, and he perished; but his Wife *Zenobia* conquer'd the Empire in the East after the Death of her Husband. Historians agree that her Beauty, her Learning, and her military Skill, in vain contended to

P I R E F A C I E

to superiorly signalize her ; they united to form that Heroine, who marched at the Head of the Army and jointly commanded with her Husband, and after his Death crown'd her Virtues with such a memorable Conquest.

NOR should the Maid of *Orleans*, tho' accused of Sorcery, be omitted among the war-like Women; she commanded the *French* Troops and obliged the *English* to raise the Siege of that City, when the greatest Part of the Inhabitants of *France* had already decided in their Favour, and there was scarce any Opposition to their reducing the whole Kingdom.

T H E S E

P R E F A C E.

THESE are Women whose Heroism, Courage, and even Success, are equal to any Feats the Men can lay claim to: All Historians coincide in giving them their due, and their greatest Eulogy is a mere Recital of their Actions.

THOSE famed for Virtue, and particularly Chastity, are not less numerous, than the Heroines and Patriots; to mention a few ——— *Lucretia*, Daughter to *Tricipitinus*, and *Collatinus's* Wife, was surpris'd in her Chamber by *Sixtus Tarquinius*, who threatened her with immediate Death, then to place a dead Slave by the Side
of

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of her, and publish to the World that he found him in the Act of Adultery with her, if she refused to consent to his lustful Desires: Rather than this Infamy should be brought upon her Family, the Falseness of which none would be able to discover, she let herself be ravish'd; but the next Day she convened her Father, her Brother, and all her Relations, to whom she related what had happened, and then killed herself in their Presence. The *Roman* Government was by this Accident changed, for her Relations and Friends being irritated to the highest Degree at this Insult, drove *Tarquin* out of the City, and with him expell'd the Name.

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Name of King, in whose stead
two Consuls were elected.

Pontia, a Roman Lady, could
neither be tempted by Promises
or Threats to transgress her con-
jugal Vow, and preferred being
killed by *Octavius*, one of the
Tribunes of the People, rather
than commit Adultery with
him.

Sophronia, that illustrious Ro-
man Matron, who was called
the Christian *Lucretia*, for her
great Chastity, seeing herself at
the Devotion of the Tyrant *Max-
entius*, after having asked Leave
of her Husband, and Pardon of
God, for what she was going to
execute,

P R E F A C E.

execute, killed herself to preserve her Virtue unfullied. To these may be added *Susannah*, whose Virtue was Proof against Corruption, and whose Judges had therefore bribed false Witnesses to get her condemned to die; but *Daniel* the Prophet having proved the Falsity of their Evidence from their own Words, the Witnesses were stoned according to the Laws of *Talion*, and *Susannah* was justified.

THE learned *Sappho*, wrote nine Books of Lyric Verse, besides Epigrams, Elegies, and other detached Pieces of Poetry. There was another Woman of this Name, famous for Poetry,
born

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born at *Mytilena*, Capital of the *Ile of Lesbos*. She was enamour'd with *Phaon*, who despised her, but whom she nevertheless followed into *Sicily*, where she threw herself into the Sea and was drowned. Her natural Genius, equal to any thing, was embellished with a great Share of Learning, and she was called the *Tenth Muse*. Of all the Works which she composed, though very numerous, there only remains an Hymn to *Venus* and an Ode she wrote upon one of her female Friends. She invented two Sorts of Verse known by the Names of the *Eloic* and the *Saphic*.

Eudocia,

P R E F A C E.

Eudocia, Daughter to *Leo*, an *Athenian* Philosopher, married the Emperor *Theodosius* II. She was endow'd with a great Share of natural Sense, with all the Advantages of corporeal Symetry; very religious and much given to the Reading of sacred Books, particularly Poetry, in which she excelled. The most remarkable of her Productions were her Versions of several of the Histories of the Old Testament.

Proba Falconia, a Roman Proconsul's Wife, arrived at a great Proficiency in the *Greek* and *Latin* Languages, was deeply versed in the holy Writings and in Poetry; she turned several of
A the

P R E F A C E.

the Books of the Old and New Testament into Verse, which were much esteemed; and left many other learned Productions.

These are some of those shining Ornaments of History, which authorise us to claim an Equality with the Men in all those Virtues and Accomplishments which have rendered Mankind famous in every Age.

IF under the oppressive Tyranny of the Men, we have been able to give such striking Instances of our Fortitude, Chastity, and Abilities for Learning; how much more conspicuous might we have expected to find the glorious Actions of the Sex,
had

P R E F A C E.

had we been in every thing upon a Footing with them ; --- Opportunities equally favourable to acquire ---- and Occasions equally frequent to testify our Knowledge and our Skill ! In all that is immediately dependant upon ourselves, how greatly superior do we appear even under our Disadvantages. The Goodness of our Heart, and our virtuous Disposition are ever transcendant. Let our Opponent search all Histories ancient and modern, and produce such Instances of Chastity in the Men, as have here been promiscuously cited. If *Joseph* refused his Mistress's Embraces, may we not rather attribute it to his Gratitude

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for his Master than to his consummate Chastity? And if *Scipio Africanus*, at the taking of *New Carthage*, had Prudence enough to abstain from the Enjoyment of the beautiful Prisoner who was brought him, is there not Reason to imagine h^e. Ambition conquer'd his Lust, and that he subdued one Passion by the Indulgence of a greater?

WITH respect to Holy Writ, there is not a Passage in this Work that any wise clashes with it. The Scripture does not mention a Word of Inequality between the Sexes. If it be asked why God began to make Man before Woman? This simple Answer may suffice:

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suffice.: It was his Will, and it has not been thought proper to give us any Reason for it. Upon this Occasion, as upon many others, all unauthorised Deductions from the holy Scripture, to give a Sanction to whimsical Propositions, should be avoided. As no reason is there assigned for it, and as we are told that Man and Woman are the Images of God, why should we suppose he esteems one more than the other?

I F it be added, that *Eve* was not only created after *Adam*, but was formed out of one of his Ribs: agreed; but *Adam* was made of Clay — is that a Reason that Clay was more noble than him?

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Our Antagonists may, perhaps, go on --- "God would not form Woman out of the Head of Man, for fear she should equal him in Sense; nor out of his Feet, for fear he should despise her too much; but of one of his Ribs, to shew her she should consider him as her Chief and her Master."

To this may be answered, with much greater Reason, "that *Eve* was formed of one of *Adam's* Ribs to teach them they should go Hand in Hand, and by the Side of each other."

AFTER all this Argument can only relate to *Eve*, other Women being no wise indebted to their Husbands for their Creation, and
do

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do not pretend to be of a more perfect Nature than their Children, tho' they contribute to their Production in a quite different Manner from *Adam*, with respect to *Eve*.

THUS much was thought necessary, with respect to our first Creation, to anticipate the Cavillers, and all the futile Arguments they might oppose to our original Equality.

CORPOREAL Distinction may at first, perhaps, have the greatest Weight in the Argument against us. This must relate to Strength, and the Inconveniencies of *Child-bearing*: With respect to the first, every

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every one knows it is greatly increased by Exercise, and that if the Women used as much as the Men, though they might not in general be able to carry such great Burthens as them, they would, at least, be strong enough to undergo all the Fatigues of Business, or War. If this be allowed, it is sufficient, as I have no Intention of conferring upon my Sex the honourable Employment of *Porters*.

In regard to *Child-bearing*, it may be only necessary to remark, that in *America* and the greatest Part of *Africa*, where the Women work like the Men, Pregnancy does not prevent them. They deliver themselves in the
Middle

P R E F A C E.

Middle of a Wood or a Field ; they afterwards wash themselves and their Children in the next Rivulet, carry them home without wrapping them up, leave them and return to their Work more freely than before.

It may be proper to acquaint the Reader in this Place, that tho' all loose Thoughts have been properly excluded from the following Sheets, they are not replenish'd with dry Reflexions and tedious Researches. Our Adversaries furnish us with an ample Field for Ridicule ; to think they have been Five Thousand Years searching after Truth --- that to this are consecrated their whole Lives, their

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their Fortunes, and their Pleasures ; that they are furnished with stupendous Arsenals and Magazines, amply filled with the Crops of all their learned Predecessors --- it is pleasant to enquire what Advantages they or Society have reaped ? Why, *Chimeras, Prejudices, Errors, Sects, Divisions, Superstition !* Are not these solid Advantages ? It is true, they have frequently interrupted the general Tranquility of the World, and been the Spring of Rivers of Blood ; but then the Intent was good ; *Truth*, nought but *Truth* was the Object ! Poor weak Women have been debarr'd from these Researches, and they have had little or no Hand in all the

P R E F A C E.

the Revolutions of Empires, and the repeated Massacres of Mankind---they are therefore despised! ---- But where is *Truth* all this while? Why, *at the Bottom of a Well, where no Body can descend!* They have been these Five Thousand Years finding out that--- *They know nothing.*

Is it not diverting to think, that after these repeated and universally approved Determinations, the Men should pique themselves upon their *Knowledge*, and deride the Women for their *Ignorance*?

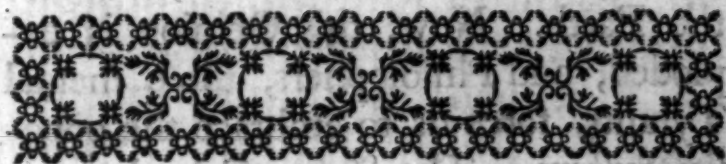
F E M A L E

THE FEMALE

the Revolution of Principles, and
the repeated Malices of Man-
kind—they are therefore deter-
red!—But where is Truth all
this while? Why, on the Bottom
of a Well, where no Body can de-
scend! They have been there
Five Thousand Years finding out
that—They were wrong.

Is it not diverting to think
that after these repeated and un-
varying approved Determinations,
the Men should pick themselves
upon their Knowledge and decide
the Women for their Ignorance?
How good a Lesson will this
teach the World, that all men
and women are ignorant!

THE FEMALE



FEMALE RIGHTS

VINDICATED, &c.

MANKIND are persuaded to
believe an infinite Number of
Things, for which they can
give no Reason; their Con-
viction is founded upon trifling Appear-
ances, and the opposite Opinion would
have as easily prevailed, if Custom had
authorised it, or their Intellects had been
first impressed with its Idea.

It was but t'other Day, comparatively
speaking, that all the World believed,
and indeed to have not believed, would
have been subscribing one's self a scepti-
cal

cal Idiot, that the Sun revolved round the Earth. Now, this Opinion is exploded, and Philosophers, those mental Tyrants, force us to embrace the opposite System. The *Julian* Calendar, after being approved for upwards of Seventeen Hundred Years, was at length found erroneous, and the *Gregorian*, so long rejected, legally authoris'd and received.

When the *Europeans* first conquered *America*, the Savages seeing Numbers of their Countrymen fall by their Sides, readily imagined the efficient Cause of Death was in the Muskets, that were discharged, and when they passed by these mechanical Butchers, failed not to beseech them to spare them. They have certainly been disabused e're now, as the Numbers of our brave Countrymen that have lately fallen by the *Indians* in the *French* Interest, too clearly demonstrate.

Every one thinks his own Country the best, because he is most used to it, and the Religion in which he was brought

brought up the only Orthodox, tho', perhaps, he never took the least Pains to enquire into it, or compare it with others.

Were we inclined to investigate the Cause of these different Opinions, we should find them center'd in Interest or Custom; and it is infinitely more difficult to rectify such Sentiments as are formed by Prejudice, than to alter those which the most convincing Reasons establish.

To these Judgments may be added the vulgar Opinion of a Disparity between the Sexes, and all that relates to them. It is as ancient as it is universal; and the Sage and Ignoramus are so strongly prepossessed with the Notion, that the Women are inferior to the Men, as well in Capacity as Merit, and that they should remain in that State of Dependence we now see them, that the opposite Sentiment cannot at first fail to appear a very singular Paradox.

It would, however, be needless to make use of any solid Argument to establish this Opinion, if the Men were more equitable, and their Judgment less bias'd by Interest. As the Case now stands, we must fathom the Argument, and, in convincing them of our Equality, demonstrate to them their own Weakness and Insignificance.

Ask a Man his Opinion of the Women in general, and he readily answers, (if he speaks from his Heart) we were made for his Use and Convenience ; appropriated to the bringing up of Children in their tender Years, and the Regulation of Household Oeconomy. Some of a more enlivened Turn may, perhaps, add that "there are Women who have Sense and Conduct, but if one critically examines either, the Woman is always discovered ; that they have neither Prudence or Resolution, devoid of that genuine Sensibility with which the Men are endowed ; and that the Will of
Heaven

Heaven is wisely executed by the Men, in preventing their dabbling in the Sciences, having any Share in the Government of States, or Employments of any real Importance; that it would be a fine Thing indeed to hear a Woman speak in the House, or plead at the Bar; or how amply ridiculous would it be to see a Lady actually upon the Bench, summing up the principal Points of Argumentation to clear the Intellects of a Jury; or turning to the hostile Field, behold a Female General conducting an Army, giving Battle to the Enemy, or regulating a Siege."

I acknowledge we might at first fill these Employments something awkwardly, and the Transition would not a little surprize, --- but this would only be by Reason of its Novelty. If at the founding of States, and the Regulation of the different Employments which compose them, the Women had been allotted their Parts, they would have been equally accustomed to their Execution as

the Men, and there would have been nothing more wonderful in their Vocations.

The last Resource of our Opponents is, that *Things have always been in this Respect upon the same Footing, which is a Conviction of the Necessity of their remaining so; and that if Women had been proper Objects for receiving the Culture of Science, or filling important Employments, they would doubtless have made their Way to both.*

But this Argument is founded upon the supposed Equity of the Men, and an erroneous Opinion fostered by Custom. Is it consequentially just, because it prevails? As it is to be supposed that Men are to be guided by Reason, it is imagined she dictated Rules so universally received,---but the Fault is not to be imputed to her.---The Vanity and Ambition of Men prescribed, and continue the Imposition.

In all Countries the Women are, in every Respect, dependant upon the Men, without being able to acquire such Lights, or place themselves in such a Situation as to be signalized by their Capacities. No one pretends to have seen us more happy, for such has always been the State of Things, and it must be own'd that our Situation in *England* is preferable to any Spot of the Globe. In *China* the Female Infants have their Feet compressed to such a Degree, that they cannot afterwards stir out of Doors; and at home they are allowed no other Company than that of their Husbands and their Children. In *Turkey* they are equally confined; in *Italy* they are very little better; and in *France*, by the Salique Law, they are excluded to reign. As to the *Asiatics*, the *Africans* and the *Americans*, their Wives are their Servants.

Even in *England* we are subordinate in every Thing, except we chance to throw the highest Cast, and such odds there

there are we never reign, that *Elizabeth* and *Anne* should be cited upon every Occasion to prove our Abilities for governing. The Men, our Opponents, will not in this Case allow their favourite Maxim, from small Things one may judge of great; but on the contrary, our Tendernefs and prudent Conduct of our Children, and our great Attention to domestic Concerns, are cited against us as Proofs of our Unfitness for more eligible Employments, and that we were sent into the World for nought else; and because it is difficult to put Things upon another Footing, they pretend it is impossible.

The wisest Legislators in founding their States, have settled nothing in favour of the Women. Every Law tends but to support the Men in their unjust Possessions. Amongst the many Sages of Antiquity, as well as modern Times, who have mentioned the Sex, there is scarce one who has spoke in their Favour. In this Respect, the Conduct of Men.

Men is so analagous in all Ages, and in every Part of the Globe, that one would be inclined to imagine they have entered into an hereditary and universal Combination against us. — 'Tis, indeed, the Opinion of many, that they are prompted by instinct to oppress us. What may induce this latter Belief is the suppliant Behaviour of the Women, — they seem to look upon their Situation as natural, whether it be through a Defect of properly reflecting upon what they are, or being born and educated in a State of Subjection, they consider the Evil as irremediable. — This much is certain, there are very few of our Sex who so much as pretend to claim an Equality with the Men, but seem to imagine their intellectual Capacities are as different as their Bodies, and that there should be as much Distinction in the Functions of their Lives, as in those of their Bodies.

This Opinion is nevertheless a Prejudice, founded, like most others, in Custom, nurtured by Appearances, and
matured

matured by neglecting a critical Search after Truth. In order to arrive at the Source of this Error, we must recur to ancient Customs and Manners, when we shall find that Women were compell'd to submit to the Law of Force, and neither the Want of intellectual Capacities or real Merit on their Side, ratified the Decree, which was as unjust as it was despotic.

When one considers, without Prejudice, the State of human Affairs, as well with respect to the past, as the present; it must be acknowledged, they all concur in one Point, that Reason has always submitted to Prejudice, Ambition, or Interest; and one would imagine that Histories were only wrote to prove, that in all Times, since Man was Man, Force has prevailed. The greatest Empires of *Asia* were the Work of Usurpers and Robbers, and the Ruins of the *Grecian* and *Roman* Monarchies were amassed by a Set of Men who thought themselves sufficiently powerful to oppose their Masters,

Masters, and give Laws to their Equals. This Conduct is not less striking in all Societies; and if Men behave in this Manner to each other, is not there still greater Reason to believe, that they exerted their greatest Power against their Wives, whom it was so much their Interest to subdue?

Is it improbable to suppose, that the Men, perceiving they were more robust, and had some corporal Advantages over the Women, imagined Superiority declared for them in every Thing? In the Beginning, the Conclusion was no Way detrimental to us, as Things were then upon so different a Footing to what they are at present. There were then no Government, no Knowledge, no Employment, no Religion; and of course Dependance then carried with it no disagreeable Ideas. They lived like Children, and their Advantages related to their Pastime. The Men and Women were equally in a State of Innocence; their Employment was the Cultivation
of

of the Earth, and their Recreation Hunting; he or she that was the most successful was the most esteemed. The Inconveniences and Consequences of Child-bearing decreasing the Woman's Strength for some Time, and preventing her to Work as before, her Husband's Assistance became absolutely necessary, and the more so when she had pre-conceived Children. Whilst a Family was composed of only a Father and a Mother, and a few little Ones, no farther Homage than Esteem and Complaisance was expected on the Side of the Man; but when the Children grew up, when under the same Roof were the Father and Mother, his Children and Grandchildren, the State of Dependance was increased. The Mistress submitted to her Husband, the Son honoured his Father, and the Father commanded his Children. As Brothers seldom agree together, one may reasonably imagine they were not long so, but separated in Consequence of their domestic Jars.

Hence

Hence arose different Societies, at the Head of each a Governor had elected himself. The voluntary Dependance which was before approved, was now changed into forced Obedience by this despotic Invasion. Fathers, Mothers, and Children, were compelled to submit to the unjust Usurpers, and the Situation of the Women was more disagreeable than before. Till then they had wedded none but Relations, who looked upon them and treated them as Sisters; but henceforward they were forced to marry the greatest Strangers, who regarded them at once as the vanquished, and the choicest of the Enemy's Spoils.

It is, alas! but too frequent, that the Conquerors despise the weakest of the Conquered; and the Women appearing to them in this Light, on Account of their Vocations, which demanded less Strength than those of the Men, they were looked upon as their Inferiors.

Some were contented with their first Usurpation, but others still more ambitious, prompted by their Success, were disposed to encrease their Conquests. The Women having too great a Share of Humanity to assist in these unjust Designs, they were left at Home, and the Men, by Reason of their bodily Strength, were preferred for the Execution of these Exploits. In this Situation Things were no farther esteemed than they were looked upon as useful for attaining the desired End; and the Lust of Dominion having become the most prevailing Passion, which cannot be satisfied but by Violence and Injustice, it is not surprising that the Men, being the executive Instruments, should in this Case be preferred to the Women. They retained the Conquests they made, and their own Councils ratified the Tyranny which they themselves executed. Thus it was that the Tenderness and sympathetic Feeling of the Women debarred them from sharing in the Government of States.

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The Example of Princes was soon imitated by their Subjects. Every one strove to gain the upper Hand of his Associate, and the Dominion of Particulars was still more absolute over their Families. When a Lord found himself Master of a People and a considerable Country, he formed it into a Kingdom; he established Laws for the Government of it, chose his Officers from amongst the Men, and appointed those to the most advantageous Employments, who had been the most useful in advancing his Schemes. This unjust Preference of one Sex to the other, made the Women less respected than before, and their Dispositions and Occupations estranging them to all the Butchery of War, it was imagined they could be of no farther Utility to the Preservation of States, than by assisting to people them.

When Temples were built for divine Worship, Sacrifices were instituted, and the Men who had already appropriated

to themselves the Government of States, failed not also to seize upon the sacerdotal Offices; and Custom having already influenced the Women to believe the Men were Masters of every Thing, they did not so much as claim any Share in ecclesiastical Power. Such Priestesses as were admitted, were subordinate to the Men, and were appointed to impose upon the Vulgar, who were taught to believe in the fabulous Deities of those Days.

The Women being thus consecrated to Husbandry and the training up of their Children, it is not surprising they had no Share in inventing Sciences. The *Egyptian* Priests, who had but little real Employment, amused themselves in discoursing with one another upon the most striking Effects of Nature: By Dint of Reasoning, they made such Observations, as excited the Curiosity of Foreigners, who repaired into *Egypt* to be further acquainted with their Discoveries. The Sciences were then not yet even in their Infancy

Infancy, and the Women were not attracted by them from their Household Concerns; beside, the Jealousy with which their Husbands were so early inspired, would have made them fancy their Wives Visits (had they paid any to these Priests for Instruction) were through an amorous View, rather than that of acquiring Knowledge.

Nevertheless, when Learning had made some Advances, we find that many Women were equal to the most illumined Men of their Time; but the false Decorum that succeeded, which proscribed the Men, as well as their own Sex, from visiting them for fear of creating Jealousy, shut from them all further Avenues to Knowledge; and for Want of properly rehearsing what they knew, it gradually diminish'd till it became extinct.

If it be ask'd, how Women came to amuse themselves with frivolous Gewgaws? I shall answer, the Case was far

different at that Period with respect to the Fate of female Acquisitions in Government, Science, and Learning, and in Modes and Taste. In these the Women participated with the Men, who finding us handsomer than themselves, approved our ornamenting ourselves by imitating us; but their Occupations calling them off from paying so much Attention to their Persons as we could, in gaining this Superiority, we forced the Men's Attention, soften'd their Behaviour towards us, and render'd our Situation more supportable than it was before. Thus Women, by their Address and Ingenuity, regain'd some small Degree of their natural Power.

It evidently appears by this historical Conjecture, conformable to the usual Conduct of Men, that they gained by Force the Empire they have assumed over us; for to assert that Reason adjudged it to them, none but the really meritorious Men, who have underwent a rigid Probation, should claim it. None but

but those who have Talents to improve should be allowed the Visit of the Sciences. None but such as are thoroughly capable of executing, should be admitted to Employs. But how opposite is Experience! Chance, Interest, or Necessity, decides their Vocations. Children follow their Father's Trade as if a Genius for it were hereditary: Others are necessitated to turn Parsons, who would rather fight their Way thro' the World with a red Coat and a Cockade; and the clearest Man in the World without Interest or Money, may live and die in Obscurity, though he would have been the greatest Ornament to Society in the most exalted Employment.

To carry this Remark no farther, let us make this evident Conclusion, That Women in general are as fit for the Offices of State, as those who most commonly fill them. All Women are not born with great Capacities any more than the Men; but balance the Account, and it will not, at least, poize against us.

In

In order to investigate this last Point to its Source, we must examine the Behaviour of Children of both Sexes, when Custom and Prejudice have not warp'd their Dispositions: In Girls one may discover more Ease, Genius and Address; when Fear or Shame does not stifle their Ideas, they talk in a more vivacious and agreeable Manner than Boys; there is more Freedom and Gaiety in their Amusements; and they attain much quicker any Thing that is taught them, when equal Pains are taken to instruct them: They are more assiduous, and have greater Patience in performing any Exercise; are more humble, modest and reserved: In a word, one may discover in them, in a much higher Degree, all those excellent Qualities which indicate a superior Genius.

Notwithstanding these favourable Prognostics in the female Sex, when they are yet in their Cradle, no Attention is paid to the Nuture of their Capacities. Tu-

tors

tors and Lessons are confined to the Men; the greatest Care is taken to instruct them in every thing that may fortify their Sense, and regulate their Judgment; whilst the Effeminacy of the Women is left to increase upon them, through Idleness or Ignorance, by the most puerile, or the meanest Vocations. In despite of this Partiality and Preference, the Men are every Day forced to acknowledge "the two Sexes resemble, an elder and younger Brother, the latter of whom frequently testifies, notwithstanding his negligent Education, that the other surpasses him in nothing but the Advantage of being first born."

But after all, pray let me ask any Person that is not a Pedant or a Pedagogue, of what great Benefit is Learning in general to Men? It is lost upon the greatest Part for Want of Comprehension; these remain as ignorant as they were, and reap no other Advantage from it, than becoming greater Fools than before. Others of more Discernment immerse

into

into a *classical* Series of Vice, Debauchery, Immorality, and Prophaness; they acquire as much *light* as *obscures* their Intellects to all religious Belief; decide, and pretend to refute orthodox Points they do not understand. In acquiring a smattering of *Greek, Latin, and Metaphysics*, they give up their *G--d* and countermand their Salvation. Had they ought in them before pleasant, agreeable, or diverting, it is lost in the Pedant. Every Thing displeases them, and they displease every Body. Their literary Voyage may be compared to a real one among Savages, from whence they return with all the barbarous Manners of the Natives. What they have acquired resembles contraband Goods, which they neither dare, or know how to dispose of. If they have a Mind to come back to themselves and the World, the School of the Ladies is the only Crucible for their Transmutation, where they are melted down into polite, agreeable, conversable People. The Dross of Erudition no longer taints them, and they are rendered fit for Society.

When

When this is maturely considered, instead of despising the Women for Want of Learning, they should be respected for it. If on the one Hand, they are by this Means prevented displaying their Talents to Advantage; on the other, their natural Genius is secure from being spoilt or lost; and notwithstanding this Privation, their Virtue and good Sense, their Ease and Affability increase with their Age; and if we compare the Youths, who just start from their Studies, with Girls of the same Age, and an equal Share of Sense, their opposite Behaviour would induce one to believe, the Ladies were just come from the University, and the young Gentlemen broke loose from their Tapestry.

Continue the Comparison between what are called *Learned Men* by the World, and ourselves (so universally believed) weak, frail Women. One would imagine the Learning with which their Heads are stuffed, had blinded their

Ind-
rest of their Reasoning.

Indeed,

Intellects, and confused all their Ideas. How few of them can utter a Sentence with either Ease or Grace; they are so attentive to lug in hard Words by the Head and Shoulders, that they confound themselves; repeat the same Thing a dozen Times over, and as often lose the Chain of their Discourse; and would not at length be able to finish it, if, perhaps, some sensible, *unlearned* Female did not assist them.

When a Woman begins a Relation, there is no studied Prelude to make it come *apropos*; no false Interpretation given to any former Discourse to render it pertinent; but the Conversation having naturally introduced her Story, she, with an unaffected Ease, relates it, without being at a stand for Words, (*or questioning the Authority of some, and rejecting others*) which flow with a spontaneous Propriety. The engaging Complaisance with which the Women offer their Opinion in any Argument, proves at once the Decency of their Conduct, and the Justness of their Reasoning.

Indeed,

Indeed, Nature seemed to destine Women for Orators; their natural untutor'd Eloquence so far surpassing all the Rhetoric and Logic of the Schools. With what graceful Ease they deliver themselves; they seem by Intuition to choose the most energetic Expressions; and though they are but seldom allowed to study Grammar, their Forms of Speech are the most perfect Idioms of their Language. When I mention a *Cibber* or a *Pritchard* as public Orators (for such are Actresses to be consider'd, as the Stage is the only Place where we can display our Talents that Way) perhaps I shall be excused citing any private Personages, though I am confident many equal them. As a Proof of our Disposition and natural Capacities for the most ornamental Learning, I shall refer to Mrs. *Carte*, who has done such strict Justice to *Epictetus*, and display'd such a Fund of real Literature in her late Translation, that the modern male Critics have owned her equal to any Genii of their Gender.

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When

When we consider the Sex with respect to Medicine, it would seem they were born to exercise the Art, and assist the Sick. Their great Cleanliness, their Attention to every minute Complaint, their Readiness to redress it, their kind Behaviour, their sympathetic Fondness, are so many Restoratives to the Patient. Their Abilities are not confined to administering the Remedies; they are equally fit for discovering them. The World is indebted to our Sex for a Number of medicinal Inventions, and our Countrywomen in particular (some of whom have received pecuniary Grants from Parliament for their Discoveries) are remarkable for their great Hospitality and Charity to the Sick of all Kinds.

Let us now view the Ladies in a married State, in which they enter for Life, the many Vicissitudes whereof force them to exert the greatest Philosophy, and the most consummate Prudence. Little Experience will evince that the Women are
more

more suited for this holy Union than the Men. Girls are capable of regulating a House, and all the domestic Concerns of a Family, at the Age when Men are not able to regulate themselves, and should remain under the Government of their Tutors, instead of launching out as Masters of themselves and Families.

What Pains do the Women take to live peaceably with their Husbands? They submit themselves to their Controul, they do nothing without the Consent of their Lords and Masters; they force their Inclinations in almost every Thing, to avoid displeasing, and they frequently deprive themselves of the most reasonable Diversions to prevent giving their Husbands any Suspicion. The Inconstancy of the male Sex is notorious, and the Fidelity of the Women is as remarkable. Custom has authorised them both; so cruel is that Tyrant to us upon every Occasion! We nevertheless patiently support our Misfortunes, even though our Husbands take every possible Means to

aggravate them. How manifestly superior are we here in Sense, Reason, and Forbearance!

The Regulation of domestic Concerns, is the Department of the Women, because the Men's Pride makes them fancy it beneath them, otherwise we should not be indulged in this small Share of Government. But the great Care we take of our Children plainly proves how suited we are for any Vocation, and particularly for this, which is of no small Importance, when it is maturely considered how much the Commonwealth depends upon the proper training of Children. How frequently is a Mother's Rest interrupted, by her Attention or dread of her Child's Wants; she, with the greatest Pleasure, deprives herself of Necessaries, that her Child may not want them; if it testifies the least Symptoms of Pain, the Mother is upon the Rack till it is appeased, and is still more tortured for not being able to ease her Child at the Price of her own Suffering.

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The virtuous Conduct and religious Example, which is ever greatest on the Side of the Wife; fail not to give that moral Turn which is always to be found, *even* in Men, till such Time as they have abandoned themselves to Libertinism and Licentiousness.

Were I to enter into a particular Detail of all the Circumstances in Life, wherein the Women manifest such superior Virtues to the Men, it might be thought too great a Panegyric (bordering upon Partiality) from a female Pen. How striking would be their Sobriety and Abstemiousness, with respect to Drinking and Eating! How philosophically great their Patience in Adversity; their Courage and Resolution in Fatigue and Difficulties; their Moderation in Pleasure, and the Indulgence of their Passions! How extensive their Charity and Benificence! How rigid their Probity! How amazing their Prudence! In a Word, we should appear to parti-

cipate with the Men, in all human Virtues, without partaking of many of their innumerable Vices and Foibles.

These are my Sentiments and Observations upon the intellectual Capacities of the two Sexes; but to avoid being dogmatical (which is the great Vice of my Opponents) I shall now consider, and I hope refute, the most material Arguments that have been urged to prove a Disparity between us.

What confirms the Vulgar in their Opinion of the Women is, that the Learned corroborate it. Thus the Sentiments of the World being bias'd by an implicit Belief of what they are told from those they look upon as their Superiors, they give up their Right to think for themselves, and are blind-folded led by their Nose, into any *Depth* of Error that Custom may have prepared.

The

The Idea of Truth being annexed to Science, what is proposed by those who are learned, never fails being looked upon as true; and as the greatest Number of these are only nominally so, those who let themselves be decided by the Majority, are on the Side of Error, which is the most agreeable to them, by Reason of their great Intimacy with it.

Thus it happens when they meet with Poets, Orators, Historians, and Philosophers, who publicly assert that the Women are inferior to the Men; less noble; less perfect; they are easily reconciled to this Opinion, being ignorant that the pretended Knowledge of these Writers, is just the same as their own, differing in nothing but its greater Extent, and being more specious; adding to the Force of Custom, the Sentiments of the Ancients, upon whose Authority all their Certainty is founded: And in this Respect, the Learned and the Unlearned, fall into the same Mistake, by believing
what

what those they esteem assert, and being prejudiced in their Favour, credit whatever they say must be true; instead of deferring their Approbation till they are convinced of their Veracity.

Poets and Orators have no other Design, than to please and persuade; and Appearances are sufficient with most Men. Exaggerations and Hyperbole being essentially necessary to them, in order to enlarge Ideas as occasion suits, they at Pleasure transform great Things into small, and small Ones into great. Thus they too frequently attribute the Vices of some particular Women to the whole Sex, and the Virtues of some individual to all the masculine Creation. The Ornaments, with which they decorate their Discourse, has a marvellous Effect in forcing a Belief upon the Unwary. Their fine Words and flowing Sentences dazzle the Judgment of the Ignorant, and prevent their discovering the Truth. There are several Pieces wrote against the Women, which to most People

carry

carry all the Appearance of Reason, when nothing but the Figures of Speech, such as Metaphors, Proverbs, Descriptions, Similies, are of any real Force. And because there is generally a good deal of Art and Genius in these Compositions, it is imagined there is equal Truth in them.

There are People simple enough to imagine, that the Women are more given to Choler and Passion than the Men, because Poets have represented the *Furies* under the Figures of Women; they should consider this as only a poetic Flight upon *Pegasus*, and that the same Hand that draws the Harpies with female Visages, paints the *Devil* in the Shape of a Man.

I have heard some doughty Disputants endeavour to prove that the Women are inconstant, because a certain famous *Latin* Poet has said, *they are subject to continual Changes*; and a *French* Writer has compared them to a *Weathercock*. Such dull Rogues may well mistake the Meaning of

of an Author, and fancy the *Point* of Wit to be the *Point* of Dispute.

Common Eloquence may be called *Speaking Optics*; there is no *Point* of Light in which it may not place a Figure; there is no Colour, no Appearance that it cannot give it; there is no Virtue that may not appear a Vice in this *Speculum*.

What Historians assert with respect to the Women, makes still greater Impression than the Harrangues of Orators; as they appear to advance nothing upon their own Authority, their Evidence is less suspected; besides, it agrees with People's prior Opinion, and they are satisfied in finding Women were formerly in the same Situation they are now. But all the Influence Historians have upon the Minds of Men, is nothing but the Effect of Prejudice, so common with respect to Antiquity, which is represented under the Figure of an old Man, who being endowed with great Wisdom and Experience, is not liable to be imposed upon,,

upon, or assert ought that deviates from Truth.

Nevertheless, the Ancients were equally liable to Error as the Moderns; and there is no more Reason for assenting to their Opinion now, than there was at the Time of their Existence. Women were looked upon formerly as they are at present, and with just the same Reason; therefore every Thing the Men have said upon this Subject, should reasonably be suspected, because they are Judges in their own Cause, and would never decide against themselves. For this Reason, when the Sentiments of Fifty Authors are cited against the Women, they are to be consider'd as the Tradition of Prejudice and Error. There are as little Faith and Rectitude in ancient History as in common Relations, wherein, it is too well known, there are hardly any. Authors never fail to intersperse in their Writings what is dictated by their Passions or their Interest; and the most Part of them having but very confused

fused Notions of Virtue and Vice, frequently take one for the other: Those who read their Productions, with the usual Prepossession in Favour of those they esteem, fail not to embrace the same Mistake. Prejudiced in their own Favour, the Virtues and Advantages of their Sex are every where exaggerated; the Merit of the Women is depreciated and debased through an opposite Interest.

When one is apprised of this inequitable Proceeding of the Men, and takes the Trouble of examining into past Times, it appears surprizing that the Women have not been behind hand with the Men in any thing, and that the Virtue they have demonstrated upon every Occasion, is far beyond ought the Men can cite in their Favour. They have testified in every Situation as great intellectual Talents and Abilities as the Men: Some have govern'd States and Empires with the most exemplary Wisdom and Moderation; others have ad-
minister'd

minister'd Justice with such Integrity as could be equall'd by nothing but the *Areopagites*. Many have, by their Prudence and good Counsel, re-established the Tranquility of Kingdoms, and replaced their Husbands upon their Thrones. Have they not commanded Armies? Have they not defended Ramparts with more than heroic Courage? Such as we might expect to find in an *Alexander*, a *Cocles*, or a *King of Prussia*! How many have there been whose Chastity was Proof against every Attack? Neither the most tremendous Threats could stagger, or the most alluring Promises seduce them; and if the Bigotry and Superstition of those Days still prevailed, the Torments they suffered for Religion would have no small Weight in the Ballance. Have we not seen as much Learning in the Women, as aught the Men could ever boast? All the Sciences have been investigated to their greatest Depths by Females. Have they not penetrated into the most latent Parts of Nature, or ascended to the very Pinnacle of metaphy-

tical Reflexion? Languages, Politics, Morality, even Mathematics, have all been exhibited in the Sex. How then does History corroborate the Imbecillity of the Women?

The Authority of the Lawyers has a great Weight with many People in respect to the Women, as their Profession was instituted to adjudge to every one his Due. They put the Women under the Dominion of their Husbands, as Children under that of their Father, in saying, that Nature allotted them the minor Functions in the Community of the World, estranging them from public Authority. This Opinion is frequently quoted upon their Foundation, and looked upon as irrefutable. But, with all due Submission to the Gentlemen of the Robe, they would be a good deal embarrassed, if they were obliged to give an intelligible Explanation of what they call *Nature* upon this Occasion, and how she has distinguished the Sex as they pretend.

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It must be considered, that those who formed or compiled the Laws, being Men, favoured their own Sex, as the Women would, perhaps, have done with regard to theirs, had they supplied their Place; and Laws having been made since the Formation of Societies, in the same Manner as they are at present, with respect to the Women, Lawyers, who were not without their Prejudices, have attributed to Nature a Distinction that is only due to Custom. The Principle of Dependance and Servitude is absolutely repugnant to Nature, which puts all Mankind upon an Equality.

It will not be difficult to persuade ourselves to dissent from the Opinion of the Learned, as it is easily discovered that their Profession does not induce them to instruct themselves with Precision of the Reality of Things. Appearance and Probability are sufficient for Poets and Orators. The Evidence of Antiquity is all that Historians busy themselves about, and the Opinion of

Lawyers is founded in Custom. But with respect to the Sentiments of Philosophers, it will be more difficult to invalidate them, as it would seem that these deep Reasoners are above all those Considerations that influence the former, as indeed they ought to be, who pique themselves upon searching after Truth wherever she is to be found. This Maxim, in which they pretend to center all their Researches, secures them a general credit for all their Propositions, particularly when they do not clash with the generally received Opinion.

Thus their Assent to the common Error of the Inferiority of the Women, gives it its greatest Weight. But when it is considered that most Philosophers reason from the same Principle as the Herd of Mankind, and not from any superior Knowledge; that they brought their Prejudice from the Schools, where it is so early inculcated; that they would be guilty of the greatest of Crimes amongst their Sect to doubt an Opinion that

that had been pre-established ; that the Disparity of the Sexes was never so much as thought of as a Subject of Argumentation, being before so thoroughly believed ; it is a moot Point, whether Philosophers are a whit more disinterested in this Respect, than any others of their Sex.

They are too busy in discovering new Worlds—infinite Space-Vacuums ; —the Materiality and infinite Divisibility of the Rays of the Sun ; to cast a Thought towards such trifling animal Beings as Women !

Though they thus fruitlessly employ themselves, it may be imagined their Principles suffice to discover which of the two Sexes has naturally the Advantage over the other, but this can be suggested by none but those who are either ignorant of their Hypothesis's, or prejudiced in their Favour. The Knowledge of ourselves is absolutely necessary for the proper Discussion of this Question ; and

particularly that of our Body, which is the Organ of Knowledge. In this respect Philosophers are very superficial, as they are in regard to Truth and Science; that is to say, the Method of acquiring such real Lights, without which it is impossible to discuss the present Question; but not to lose Time in relating any Opinions of these Men, I shall give in general what I think upon the Subject:

All Men being made like one another, they have the same general Ideas upon natural Things; for Example, of Light, Heat, and Duration; and all the Knowledge we endeavour to arrive at, is reduced to a particular Acquaintance with the interior and exterior Disposition of every Object, in order to our framing a just Opinion of them. All that Masters can do in order to teach us this, is to make us properly apply our Faculties to whatever presents itself, that we may examine the Appearances and Effects, without Precipitation or Prejudice; and to point out to us the Order
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in which it is necessary to range our Thoughts, to properly recur to them when we have Occasion.

For Example, if a Person who had no Learning were to ask me, in what consisted the Fluidity of Water? I should assert nothing upon the Occasion, but ask him what Observations he had made upon that Head? Whether he thought the Water, not being confined in a Vessel would not expend itself; that is to say, whether all its Parts would not, in that Case, separate and disunite of themselves, without any foreign Body introduced? I would bid him put his Finger in and he would find no Resistance; and tell him if he threw in Sugar or Salt, their Bodies would diminish and incorporate with the Liquor. So far I should say nothing new; and if in the same Manner I could convey an Idea to him of Rest and Motion, he would then find that the Nature of Liquor consisting in its invisible Parts being in perpetual Motion, it must necessarily be confined

confined in some Vessel, and gives Way to any hard Bodies; that the Particles of Water being small, smooth, and pointed, they introduce themselves into the Pores of the Sugar, shaking and dividing the Parts by their Junction.

This Idea of Fluidity, which is a detached Part of Physics, would appear with much greater Perspicuity under its proper Head in natural Philosophy; as it is, there is nothing so complex in it, but the common Run of Women may easily comprehend it: Nor is there any Thing more difficult in the other Parts of Science, when they are properly illustrated; and it will appear that every Science upon which we reason, requires less intellectual Capacity to comprehend, as well as Time to acquire, than to learn *Dresden Work*, or many of the most common Vocations the Women are employed in.

In fact, the Ideas of natural Objects are formed in the same Manner by every one.

one. *Adam* conceiv'd them just the same Way as we; Children like aged Persons, and Women like Men; and these Ideas are renewed, strengthened, and supported by the continual Application of the Senses. The Mind is ever busy, and they who can discover its Operations in one Respect, may easily find them out in all the Rest. There is no other Difference in the Heat of the Sun, and that of a single Spark from the fire, but the Proportion of great to small. To think properly upon these Subjects, there is no Occasion for either Address or the Exercise of the Body.

It is not so with respect to the Works I have been speaking of; here the Application must be greater; the Ideas being, as one may say, arbitrary, it is more difficult to conceive and retain them. Hence arises the Necessity of a long Apprenticeship to learn any Trade, as it depends upon Exercise. Now, in making Tapestry, the common Occupation of the Ladies, Skill is required to observe the

the necessary Proportions upon the Canvas, to distribute with Precision the Silk or Worsted; to mix with Propriety the Colours; to not too much confine or too much extend the Points; to not put more in one Row than in another; to make the Shades imperceptibly diminish. In a Word, one must know how to variegate the Work in a Thousand different Manners to arrive at any Perfection; whereas in the Sciences there is nothing to do but observe with Order Works already complete, and ever uniform; and the Difficulty in succeeding in this depends less upon the Objects and the Disposition of the Body, than in finding a Master whose Capacity is suited to the Instruction.

It is therefore not surprising to find both Men and Women without Learning converse upon Points relative to the Sciences; since the Method of acquiring them is nothing more than to correct those two Infirmities of good Sense, which are imbibed through precipitate Judgment, and confirmed by the Error of Custom.

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The Out-lines which I have just drawn of Knowledge in general, might suffice to dissuade the Prejudiced from the Opinion of a Disparity in the Sexes, with respect to their Abilities of acquiring real Learning. But as this Sentiment is of so ancient a Date, to lop the Branches is not sufficient, I must lay the Ax to the Root, and regain Inch by Inch the real Possessions of the Sex, though so long usurped under specious Pretences. It is therefore necessary to urge my Reasons still farther by stated Principles, that I may neither confuse, or be confused.

My first Proposition is, that Women, consider'd according to the Principles of sound Philosophy, are as capable as the Men of all Kinds of Knowledge, as good Sense is of no Gender.

It is easily observed that all the Difference between the Sexes, consists only in the Frame of their Bodies, with respect to those Parts, which are formed

for the Production of their Specie. The Soul is united in the Body of Women, in the same Manner as in Men; and the mental Capacity which thence arises is excited in Women by the same Passions, Desires, and Dispositions, as in Men. The Head, which is universally allowed the Seat of Reason, is, according to the most critical Anatomy, formed exactly the same, and composed of all the like Parts in both Sexes. The Women have the same Organs of Sense as the Men, in every Respect; they hear by their Ears, see by their Eyes, and taste by their Tongues; and as far as Description and Comparison can be allowed to decide, when there is no other Arbiter, they have all their Senses in as great, if not greater Perfection, than the Men. Thus are they both struck in the same Manner by external Objects; and having the same Faculties of Memory and Reflexion as the Men, wherefore can we imagine they have not the Power of Reasoning and Judging with equal Precision? If this be allowed, we have arrived at equal Knowledge in Metaphysics with them.

Having

Having Eyes and Hands, may they not perform, or see perform'd, the Anatomy of the human Body, in considering the Symetry and Structure of the Parts, with their Difference and Analogy; their Figure, Motion, and Functions; the Change they are liable to, and from thence conclude the Means to preserve them in a proper State, and of restoring them to it when they undergo any Alteration.

There is nothing more necessary for acquiring this, than having an Acquaintance with external Bodies which affect their own, in discovering their Properties, and the Cause of their good or bad Impressions: This is known by the Use of one's Senses and Experiments, and the Women being equally capable of both, may make as great a Proficiency in Physics and Medicine as Men.

Is there Occasion for such vast Penetration to know, that Respiration is abso-

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lutely necessary to preserve Life; and that this is perform'd by Means of the Air which enters at the Nostrils and the Mouth, and conveys itself to the Lungs to refresh the Blood which there passes in circulating over the whole Body, and produces Alterations in Proportion to its Density or Rarefaction, which are occasioned by Vapours and Exhalations?

As to Astronomy, what is there the Women may not equally discover with the Men? All the planetary Phænomena are visible to them by the Use of Optics; and a proper Attention to their periodical Revolutions, will inform them of their Motion and their Course. Perhaps, their general Ignorance of Mathematics may be urged as a Reason for their Conclusions being vague, and their Problems incorrect; but this does not prove their Inability of acquiring a Knowledge therein, since all their Faculties are clearly evinced to be as perfect as those of the Men.

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We have already pointed out those Dispositions in the Women, which are proper for the Culture of those Sciences necessary for their own Instruction; and if we go a little further we may discover in them a Power of acquiring those which are essential for their general Union in Society.

It is an Error in vulgar Philosophy to make such a great Distinction between the Sciences, that (according to this Opinion) one can scarce discover any Affinity between them. The Extent of human Wisdom is greatly limited, in supposing that no one Man is capable of acquiring a Proficiency in several Sciences; that being disposed for Physics and Medicine, one can have no Genius for Eloquence or Theology.

This Notion is, on the one Hand, occasioned by the usual Way of confounding Nature with Custom; in taking the Disposition of particular People more for

one Science than another for the Effect of their Constitution; whereas it is generally only a casual Inclination occasion'd by Necessity, Education, or Use; and on the other Hand, for want of having observed, that there is, properly speaking, but one Science in the World, which is that of *Knowing ourselves*, and that all the Rest are only particular Applications.

The Difficulty which, in fact, there is at present, in learning Languages, Morality, &c. consists in being ignorant how to acquire the first general Science: Hence indeed, those who believed the Women capable of knowing Physics and Medicine, might still doubt their Abilities in this Respect; but then the Difficulty would be mutual on both Sides. To arrive at this, it is necessary to think properly. This is done by seriously fixing one's Mind upon those Objects which offer themselves, in order to form clear and distinct Ideas of them; to examine them on all Sides, with all their different Relations,

Relations, and from thence conclude no Judgments but what appear manifestly true. Having made these just Conclusions, there is nothing more necessary for compleating the Science, than to range one's Thoughts in a natural Order: In this there is not any Thing above the Capacity of the Women; those who could instruct themselves in this Manner in Physics and Medicine, will find no great Difficulty in advancing themselves in all the Rest.

It is impossible that Women should practise Virtue to so great a Height, without being able to discover its fundamental Maxims. A Woman already versed in what has been related, will easily discover the Rules of her Conduct. That there are three Sorts of Duties, which comprehend all Morality; the first relates to the Almighty; the next to ourselves; and the last to our Neighbours. The clear and distinct Ideas she had formed of her Mind, and of its Junction with her Body, will infallibly induce her to

believe there is another Spirit-infinite Author of all Nature. Hence the Fundamentals of Religion will plainly appear. After having learnt by Physics in what the Pleasure of the Senses consists, and in what Manner external Objects contribute to the Perfection of the Mind, and to the Preservation of the Body, she cannot fail concluding, that to use them without Moderation, is being one's own Enemy. If afterwards she is immersed in the general Combustion of civil Society, being subject to the same Passions and Wants as her fellow Creatures, the Axiom of *Do unto others as you would they should do unto you*, will naturally occur to her; and also, that in order to effect this, one must curb that Lust of Gain which is the Cause of so many Troubles and Misfortunes in Life.

The last of these Duties will manifest itself still stronger, if she would endeavour to fathom the Depths of Polity and Jurisprudence. As they each of them relate to the Duties of Men one to another,

ther, it will appear, that in order to judge of their Obligations in civil Society, it will be necessary to recur to the first Intent of their Institution. She will view them abstracted from Society quite free and equal, without any other Inclination but that of their own Preservation, and with an equal Right over every Thing essential thereto. She will then find, that this Equality engaging them in a War, or fomenting a continual Distrust, which is opposite to their Intent, human Reason dictates to them, that they cannot live in Peace without each giving up his Right, and without entering into Conventions and Contracts; in order to render these Obligations valid, and terminate their Uneasiness, it is necessary to refer to an Umpire, who taking upon himself his delegated Authority, forces every one to keep his Promise; that being chose for the mutual Benefit of his Subjects, he can have no other Design, and that in order to be of real Service to them, it is necessary to make

make him Master of their Persons and Effects, of Peace and War.

In thus fathoming the Origin of civil Polity, she must necessarily discover what is natural Equity; what are Contract, Authority, and Obedience; what is the Nature of Law: In a Word, by proper Reflexions and Books, she may become both a Lawyer and a Politician.

After having acquired a perfect Knowledge of herself, and being thoroughly instructed in the general Rules for the Conduct of Men, she may chuse to acquaint herself with the Manner of Living in foreign Countries. Having observed, that the Changes of Time, Season, Place, Age, Food, Company, or Exercise, had occasioned Alterations, and instigated different Passions, it will not be difficult to conceive, that those Variations produce the like Effects with respect to a whole People; that they have different Inclinations, Customs, Manners, and Laws, according to their Vicinity,
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or Distance from the Sea — the South and northern Poles, according to the Face of the Country with respect to Plains or Mountains, Rivers or Woods, with respect to the Fertility of the Earth, and its Disposition for producing particular Plants; and in regard to the Commerce and Intercourse they have with their Neighbours, or distant Inhabitants of the Earth. These Things she may study and soon learn; and what are the Manners, Religion, Government, and Interests of twenty or thirty different Nations, as easily as of so many private Families. And in respect to the Situation of Kingdoms and the adjacent Lands, Seas or Islands, and the Division of the Continent, they are as easily learnt upon a Map as the different Quarters of the Town, with their Streets and Avenues.

The Knowledge of the present might induce her also to be acquainted with the past, and whatever she might retain of Geography, would be of great Use to her in History, as she would thereby

thereby have a clearer Notion of a Battle, a Voyage, or a Negociation; and if she were capable of gaining a thorough Insight into History, she might also acquaint herself with the Laws and States of her own Country, for it certainly is more complex and difficult to have a Knowledge of the Nature and Constitution of all Societies, than that of any particular one.

Thus have I given some of the highest Points of Knowledge which the Men can pretend to aim at, by which many of them have signalized themselves, as well by their Fame, as the Wealth they have amassed in their Employments——Acquisitions which they have so long monopolized to our great Prejudice, and their immortal Vanity; when it is clearly proved they have no more Pretensions than ourselves, except those that are founded in Custom, Prejudice, and Injustice. It has been judged convenient, that Prescription should take place for the Peace and Security of

of Families; that is to say, a Person who has enjoy'd another's Estate without Annoyance, for such a Space of Time, should remain in Possession of it, without the real Proprietor being able to recover any Thing by the Justness of his Pretensions. But no general Determination has ever been given, that those who might by Negligence, or otherwise, become dispossessed of their Effects, were render'd incapable of recovering them; their Inability is only founded in the civil Law of their particular Community. The Men have not only excluded the Women from partaking of the Sciences and Employments, by long Prescription, but also pretend that this Exclusion is founded in their natural Inability: There is, however, nothing more chimerical; for whether we consider the Sciences in themselves, or the Organs whereby a Knowledge of them is acquired, we shall find both Sexes equally disposed. As there is but one Way of conveying Food to the Stomach, so there is but one Method of supplying the Mind with Truth, its proper Nutri-

Nutriments. And if we consider the Difference in those Organs by which Knowledge is acquired, it must be owned, to speak with Sincerity, that the Women, in this respect, have the Advantage. There is no denying that those among the Men, who are grossest and heaviest, are certainly the most stupid; and on the contrary, that the most delicate, are the most lively and vivacious: Experience is so clear and peremptory upon this Head, that it would be needless to support it with Reasons. This Consequence then naturally follows, that Women being of a more delicate Frame than Men, they must inevitably equal them, if not exceed them, when they apply themselves to Study.

In fact, all Mankind, of both Sexes, have a like Claim to Truth, as the Mind is in all equally capable to discover it, and as we are all struck in the same Manner by those Objects that impress our Senses. This Right which is inherent in us, to obtain the same Knowledge, is

is founded in the strictest Justice, as there is not one who has not as much Occasion for it as another. There is no one who does not endeavour to be happy, and to this Center all our Actions tend. Real Happiness must be founded in clear and distinct Knowledge, and we have the greatest Authority to believe, in this our future Felicity will consist. A Miser is happy in amassing great Wealth; an imbitious Man, when he is above his Equals: In a Word; all the Happiness in Man, real or imaginary, consists in *Knowledge*, that is to say, in the Idea of possessing what they seek after.

This induces one to believe there are no Ideas of Truth, but those procured by Study, which are stable and independant of the Possession or the Want of those Things which create the Felicity of this Life. A Miser cannot be happy in the mere Knowledge of his having Riches, without he has the Desire or Intent of immediate Possession; and this naturally leads to the Reflexion of his
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being no longer their Proprietor, which must create his Affliction. But it is far different with respect to the Knowledge of one's self and its Dependances, but more particularly that which is necessary for the Commerce of the World. As both Sexes are then susceptible of the same Happiness, they have an equal Right to every Thing that tends to its Acquisition.

My next Proposition is that *Women are not less capable than Men of filling the Employments in Society.*

As I think it has been clearly proved, that the female Sex have an equal Propensity to acquire Learning as the Men; let us now enquire why they should not share in the Government or Defence of the State? Custom and Prescription are still their greatest Adversaries; but we have seen Women upon a Throne, who studied the Disposition of their People, their Interests, Laws and Customs; who guarded their Liberties,

Liberties, and protected their Properties, equal to any of their male Predecessors. And if we have not only Reason, but Example to convince us of their Abilities for regal Government, surely they cannot be supposed deficient in Talents for executing the Orders of their Prince, and they certainly would appear with equal Dignity, as Ministers, Secretaries, Vice-Queens, Governesses, or Senators. And what more surprizing would there be to see a Woman with a Casque upon her Head than a Crown? Preside in a Council of War, than in a Council of State? Would there be aught astonishing to see her exercise her Soldiers; range an Army in form of Battle, or distribute them in different Corps? There is nothing more difficult to acquire in the Art Military than in the other Arts (which the Women are most certainly able to compass;) the most essential Difference consists in its barbarous Intent, and the Thunder of the Cannon. A Typographical Map clearly points out the Routs of any particular Country, the

good and bad Passes, those which are the most dangerous and most proper for Surprizes. There are few Soldiers who are ignorant that they must possess the Defiles before they engage with their Troops; regulate all their Plans according to the Advices of Scouts they can depend upon, and even deceive their own Army by Marches and Counter-Marches, in order to better conceal their real Design. For this who so fit as a Woman, so fruitful in Invention, and so prolific in Stratagems! Might we not when a Female commanded expect to see such Artifices practised as are reckoned the Effect of the most consummate Generalship? The Enemy surprized, obliged to face the Wind, the Dust and the Sun; by unexpected Feints drawn off from the real Attack; misguided by false Alarms; drawn into Ambuscades by feigned Flights: Nor need we fear their Want of Courage, or Resolution; in this Example and Practice are, perhaps, every Thing. The Soldier, who upon the Parade, falls at the Shock of the first Discharge

Discharge of his own Musket, is the first to mount the Breach in the Day of Assault; and the Women, so resolute in the Defence of whatever regards their Honour, would not fail testifying the greatest Ardour and Resolution upon such an Occasion.

As there is no Employment in Society, which is not contained in those that we have mentioned, nor any Situation in which more Sense or Knowledge is required, it must necessarily follow that the Women are suited for all Kinds of Vocations whatever. With what Reason then may we exhort the Ladies to apply themselves to their Studies, without attending to those futile Arguments, which may be urged against such Attachment. For as they have the same Powers as the Men for discovering Truth, which is the only Thing worthy their Occupation, they should destroy all Foundation for reproaching them with preferring Indolence and trifling Amusements to the Pursuit of valuable Acquisitions. Beside,

the Interest they would have for being suited for any Vocation, the Satisfaction they would receive from being acquainted with every Topic that occurred in Conversation, would more than requite them for their Pains. Add to this the Advantage they would have over the Men, whenever they strove to convince or please; the Force of Judgment, Eloquence, and Beauty, would always secure them the Laurel; and those who had no transcendant Charms, would far more than supply their Want by literary Acquisitions: What Pretence would Husbands then have to estrange them from all but their domestic Concerns? And if Custom and Prejudice have so irrevocably exiled them from all Employments of the State, they would, at least, have the Satisfaction of judging, with what Propriety they were executed.

My next Proposition is, *That Women have naturally an advantageous Disposition for acquiring the Sciences, and that they are equally intitled with the Men to the*
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Ideas of Perfection, Nobleness, and Decency.

Hitherto we have only taken Notice of the Head in Women, and it appears that Part, considered in general, has in them as much Proportion as in the Men, and is therefore equally fit for the Reception of Knowledge, whereof it is the Organ. But as this Organ is not the same in all (the Men not excluded) it being in some more suited for certain Things than in others, we must descend more to Particulars, and enquire if there is nothing in Women which disqualifies them for the Sciences.

It may be observed, that they have generally a happier and longer Physiognomy than the Men; they have a Forehead high and large, which is the most certain Mark of a vivacious and sprightly Imagination; and this is verified by Experience, as well as their great Memory. The Power of Retention must depend upon a Brain disposed in such a Manner

as to easily receive the Impression of Objects, however slight or transitory, to preserve them perfect without Difficulty, and to present them to the Mind instantaneously when Occasion requires.

Heat being the natural Concomitant of this Disposition, it prepares the Mind for a lively Impression of Objects; it attaches it thereto, and makes it penetrate into all the Labyrinth of Reflexion upon the Subject, and by that Means examine it in whatever Point of Light it pleases. Hence it is that those who are endow'd with a great Imagination consider things on more Sides and in less Time than others; and being more ingenious and inventive, discover with the single Cast of an Eye, more than those deficient in this respect can, after the greatest Inspection. They have also the Abilities of representing Things in an agreeable and insinuating Manner, in immediately discovering the Disposition of their Company; they give a suitable Bias to their Discourse, expressing themselves with
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Grace and Ease, and placing their Thoughts in the most striking Point of Light.

All this is remarkable in the Women, and I cannot discover any Thing in it contrary to good Sense. Discernment and Propriety are its natural Characteristics. To acquire these Qualities, a sedate Reflexion upon the Objects is requisite, in order to avoid Error and Contempt by inconsiderate Flights. It is true, that a Multitude of Thoughts in Persons of a vivacious Turn, frequently run away with the Imagination; but it is nevertheless true, that, by the proper Exercise of Reason, this is to be corrected. As a farther Proof of the Compatibility of Vivacity and good Sense, the greatest Men of the last and present Age have all been Persons of strong Imagination.

Indeed, this Temperament seems to be the best suited for Society; for Mankind being intended for mutual Inter-course, those are to be esteemed who have

have the most agreeable and useful Way of communicating their Thoughts; and Women, who have naturally good Intellects, a great Imagination, and a strong Memory, with a shining Method of delivering their Sentiments, may easily acquire this so much envied Character.

This may suffice to shew, that with respect to the Head, the two Sexes are equal. Many curious Disquisitions might be made upon the other Parts of the Body, but these must be, in some Measure, veil'd. The Men have always been so unhappy as to mingle their Passions, in all the Works of Nature; there are few Ideas to which they have not added Sentiments of Love or Hatred, of Esteem or Dislike; and those which relate to the Distinction of the Sexes, are so connect-ed with Materiality, and so jumbled with Notions of Imperfection, Meanness, and other such Trifles, that there is no treating of it, in this respect, in an elegant and polite Manner.

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Nevertheless, it is upon this confused Mixture of extravagant Ideas, that the disadvantageous Notions of the Women are founded, and by which low Minds endeavour to mortify them. The best Medium between passing over unnoticed, what may be thought irrefutable, and expressing one's self in an unbecoming Manner, is to settle what may be reasonably called Perfection and Imperfection, Nobleness and Meanness, Propriety and Impropriety.

As I believe there is a God, I easily conceive that on him every Thing depends; and if after having considered the natural and internal State of Creatures (which, if Bodies, consist in the Disposition of their Parts, with respect to each other, and their external Contexture, in regard to acting upon, or being acted upon by Objects surrounding them) I endeavour to discover the Reason of these two States, I can find no other than the Will of the Author. I
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afterwards observe that these Bodies have usually a certain Disposition, which renders them capable of producing and receiving certain Effects; for Instance, that Man hears by his Ears the Thoughts of those like himself, and makes them understand his own by the Organs of Voice. And I remark, that these Bodies are incapable of these Effects, when they are otherwise disposed. Hence two Ideas arise; the first represents the original State of Things, with all the necessary Consequences, which I call Perfection; the other represents to me the opposite State, which I call Imperfection.

A Man is therefore perfect, in my Opinion, when he has every Thing that is necessary, according to the divine Institution, to produce and receive the Effects for which he is destined; and he is imperfect, when he has more or less Parts than are necessary, or some Indisposition which impedes the Intent of his Creation. Therefore being form'd in such a Manner as to require Aliment
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for his Support, this Necessity cannot be looked upon as an Imperfection, any more than its Consequence. All Creatures must be perfect when they are in their natural and usual State.

Perfection must not be confounded with Nobleness; they are two very distinct Things: Two Things may be equal in Perfection, but unequal in Nobleness.

When I consider myself, it appears that my Mind alone being capable of Knowledge, should be preferred to the Body, and consider'd as the most noble; but when I look upon Bodies, abstracted from myself, that is to say, without enquiring whether they may be useful or hurtful, agreeable or disagreeable, I cannot persuade myself that one is more noble than another, being all Matter, diversified only by their Figures. But if I interest myself in this respect in considering their Advantage or Detriment, the Consequence will be different. Tho

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my Head, abstracted from the Benefit which arises to me from it, is of no more Concern to me than the other Parts of my Body; yet, when I consider its Importance, with respect to the Union of my Mind and Body, it claims greatly the Preference to any other Part. For the same Reason, though all the Parts of the Body are equally perfect, one has a greater Regard for some than others; even those which are the most useful, are frequently consider'd as the most contemptible, because that Use may be less agreeable to us than that of the other Parts. It is the same with respect to every Thing that surrounds us and affects us. The Reason that the same Object pleases and displeases different People, is that it strikes them in a different Manner.

The Tie of Society has produced the Idea of Propriety or Decency among Men. Thus, though there is no Imperfection or Meanness in allievating the Body, it is a necessary and indispensable

Consequence of our natural Disposition, and all Ways of doing it are, in fact, equal; there are some which are considered as less decent than others, and they shock those Persons in whose Presence they are practised.

As all Creatures and all their Actions, consider'd in themselves, abstracted from Custom or the usual Esteem they are held in, are equally noble, and equally perfect, the one as the other, and being in this Respect also as decent, it may be therefore concluded, that the Notions of Propriety and Impropriety of Decency and Indecency, are only the Effect of Man's Imagination and Caprice. This appears by a Thing being decent in one Country and not so in another; and even in the same Kingdom, in different Times, or at the same Time; but among Persons of different Rank and Inclination, the same Action is decent and indecent. Propriety, it's plain then, is nothing more than the Mode or Manner in which

Things are used, but which Prudence dictates to us to regulate ourselves by.

In some Provinces of *India*, the Labourers are upon the same Footing as the Nobles are amongst us. In some Countries the Soldier is preferred to the Lawyer, in others it is just the Reverse.

In comparing these Notions with the Opinion conceived by the Vulgar of the Women, the Error will be easily discover'd.

The preceding Proposition naturally points out to us to enquire "from whence arises the Distinction of the Sexes, and how far it extends; what Difference there is between them, with respect to Vice and Virtue; and whether their general Temperament is good or bad?"

The Almighty having resolved to produce Men dependantly of each other, by the Help of two Persons, he formed

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two different Bodies for that Purpose : Each was perfect in its Way ; and it was necessary they should be disposed as we see them, and every Thing that depends upon their respective Constitutions, is to be consider'd as Part of their Perfection. It is therefore, without Foundation, that some imagine the Women are not so perfect as the Men, and represent that as a Defect, which is an essential Appendage to their Sex, without which they could not answer the Intent of their Creation. The two Sexes are necessary for producing together their Likeness, and what Reason can be given for asserting the Men are more noble than the Women, in what relates to Children ? To the Females we are all indebted for our Conception ; for our Formation ; for our Being ; for our Birth ; and for our Education. To compass this they undergo great Pain and Anxiety ; but should this prejudice the Men against them, and render them despicable in their Eyes, or recommend them to their greater Esteem and Merit ? Will any one say, that Fathers

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and Mothers who employ themselves in bringing up their Children, real good Princes who are attentive to the Welfare and Prosperity of their Subjects, or Magistrates who administer Justice with an impartial Hand, are less meritorious than those who assist them in the executive Part of their Duty?

Some Physicians have exhausted their whole Stock of Logic and Argumentation, to prove the Temperaments of the Sexes greatly different, and that of Women much inferior to the other; but the small Share that Reason has had in these stupendous Pieces, plainly evinces the Futility of their Conjectures founded in prejudice and Appearances. Female Vocations are consider'd as the Test of their Constitutions, and their Unfitness for others is proved by their Inapplication to them.

Such Reasoning scarce requires a serious Answer; yet it were necessary to make some Observations upon it. Men and Women are similar in almost every Thing

Thing that relates to the internal and external Parts of the Body, and the natural Functions whereby it is preserved, are performed in the same Manner by both. The small Difference in their internal Formation is no Proof that Women are less vigorous or strong than the Men: Nothing can decide this but Experience; there are strong and weak of both Sexes; and the Men trained up in Idleness, and Luxury are weaker than Women, and can undergo no Hardships at first; but after being accustomed to them for some Time, they become equal, if not superior to the others.

It is the same with respect to Women; those who are brought up to Labour, or take great Exercise, are more robust than the delicate Ladies who handle nothing but their Needle. Hence it may be concluded, that if both Sexes equally laboured, and took the same Exercise, they would, perhaps, be equally vigorous; this was formerly the Case in a Republic.

lic, where Wrestling and other Gymnastics were practised by both Sexes.

For this Reason no Weight should be given to certain common Expressions, which draw their Etymology from the present unnatural State of the Sexes. When a Man is to be ridiculed for Puffillanimity, he is called effeminate, meaning he is as cowardly and weak as a Woman. When on the other Hand, a Woman is to be praised for her uncommon Courage, for her Strength, or even intellectual Capacity, she is compared to a Man. These Expressions, so favourable to the Men, fail not to contribute, in a great Measure, to the high Opinion that is entertained of them.

However, Strength of Body can no wise decide the Point in favour of the Men, for in that Case Beasts might claim a Superiority over them; and among ourselves, Wrestlers, Gladiators, and even Chairmen and common Porters, would pretend to superior Merit to the greatest Genius's

Genius's of the Age. A robust Body is very seldom joined to an extensive Understanding. The greatest Philosophers and the most heroic Princes have been delicate with respect to their Persons, and the most consummate Generals would, perhaps, have been very sorry to have wrestled with the least of their Soldiers. Look at the Pulpit, the House, the Bar, or even the Stage, and answer if the most corpulent Men are the most shining Ornaments to either?

Nor will the Temperament of the Body determine any Thing. Persons of the most opposite Constitutions have shared the Voice of public Fame for their Abilities. The Choleric, the Sanguine, and the Melancholy, are certainly very different Temperaments, and yet there is neither of them any Impediment to Genius; and supposing all the Difference that is pretended between those of the Sexes, there is frequently a still greater Difference between the Temperaments.

of Men capable of the same Vocations or Productions.

If there is any Advantage with respect to corporal Distinction, it most certainly is on the Side of the Women; the most curious and finest Production in all Nature is indebted to them for its Existence; and their peculiar Grace and Beauty make all Men own them for a Time their Superiors.

Beauty is as real an Advantage as Strength and Health, and is equally allow'd by reason to prevail; if one would judge of its Worth by the Sentiments and Passions it excites, which is the common Method of estimating every Thing, it would be found to be surpass'd by nought, either in Price or Effect; so greatly are the Passions agitated, fortified, mixed, and diversified by the Impressions of Beauty.

In order to consider the Temperaments of the Sexes, with respect to Vice and

and Virtue, they must be consider'd in a State of Indifference, no way bias'd by either. In that Case, what was called Virtue at one Time, being liable to become Vice in another, according to the Revolutions of Custom, all Temperaments would be equal in this respect. To illustrate this, it is necessary to observe, that there is nothing but our Soul which is capable of Virtue, which consists in general in a firm and constant Resolution of doing what appears to us, according to different Circumstances, the best. The Body is properly only the Organ and Instrument of this Resolution, as a Sword in one's Hand to defend one's Self; and all the different Dispositions which render it more or less fit for this Use, cannot be called either good or bad, but as their Effects are more usually, or more essentially good or bad; for Instance, an Inclination to run away, in order to avoid Danger, is indifferent, as some Dangers cannot be otherwise escaped, and it is then prudent to fly; whereas it is a censurable Fear to run, when
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the Danger is to be surmounted by a noble Resistance, which produces more Good than Harm.

The Mind is not less capable in Women than in Men of that firm Resolution which constitutes Virtue, or of knowing the Occasions upon which it is to be exercised. They have the same Power of regulating their Passions as the Men; they are not more disposed to Vice than Virtue; and they may be easily inclined to the latter. This may be concluded from their natural Affection to Children, which is so incomparatively greater in Women than in Men, and which is the sure Index of Compassion, the common Virtue and Tie of civil Society.

It necessarily follows from what has been said, that *all the Difference in the Manners and Dispositions of the Men and Women, arises from no other Cause but the Difference in their Education;* and this

this I shall endeavour to illustrate, as the last Position essential to be proved.

The Dispositions we bring into the World with us, are neither good or bad, and yet how general is the Error of attributing to Nature, what is occasion'd by Custom. Instead of perplexing ourselves with enquiring into the Origin of our particular Faults and Manners, and losing ourselves in occult Causes, let us take a retrospective View of our Education, Situation, Fortune, Connexions, and Acquaintance. From hence arises all that Diversity in our Modes of Thinking; our Passions are hereby unproportioned and inordinate; Truth obscured, and Error adopted.

From this it must not, however, be concluded, that all Mankind come into the World with the same corporal Constitution. Some are brisk and lively, others dull and heavy. This Difference does not prevent the Minds of both receiving the same Instruction; but the one
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will speedily and successfully reap the Benefits of it, whilst the other is scarce acquainted with the Nature of the Study. Thus it is evident, whatever Temperance of Body the Women have, they are not less susceptible of Truth and Learning than the Men, and their general Ignorance, which is ascribed to the Difference of Sex, should be attributed to the Difference of Education; to the Prejudice and Error they so early imbibe, and which no Pains are scarce ever taken to irradicate; to the Example set before them by their Sex; to the Custom of, what is so absurdly called, *Good-breeding*; to the Restraint, Subjection and Timidity, which are imposed upon them.

No Pains are spared to persuade them, that the great Difference they perceive in the two Sexes, is the Effect of Reason, or divine Institution. Dress, Education, and Exercises, can scarce well be more opposite. A Girl under the Wing of her Mother, or the Eye of her Governess who never quits her, is taught

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to be terrified with every Thing: Ghosts and Hobgoblins are first set up as the Scare-crows of her Senses; the Danger of going alone in the Street, even at Mid-day, or to Church, is next inculcated, whilst all her Attention, and that of her Servants, is paid to her Dress and Appearance; this intoxicates her with her Beauty, whilst she reads Novels and Romances to fill her Brains with Love, Darts, and Hearts, which she would never have thought of had not she been told of them; these with the genteel Things the Beaux begin to say to her, make the Girl mad; her Mind is fix'd upon Beauty, Dress, and Conquest: In this Condition she cannot be supposed to search after Truth and Philosophy, which would shew her the Vanity of her Conduct, and the Folly of her Triumph. Her Library is her Toilet; her Looking-Glass her Oracle; Balls, Plays, and Intrigues, the Topics of her Conversation. The gay Circle of a Route or a Hurricane, the celebrated Academy, where the Sex meet for mutual Instruction;

where she who has the newest fashion'd Cap is allowed Chief of the Sect: In this consists their Philosophy, their Logic, and their Eloquence.

With respect to Girls, whose Condition obliges them to work for their Living, their Genius is still more useless to them. They are taught some Trade or Calling suitable to their Sex as soon as they come to the Age of Discretion, and the Necessity they are in of constantly attaching themselves to it, prevents their properly thinking of any Thing else.

In all that is taught the Women, is there any Thing that tends to solid Instruction? It would rather seem to be universally agreed giving them that Kind of Education which discourages their attempting any Thing superior, in order to obscure their Intellects, and fill them with Vanity and Folly, and thereby eradicate all Seeds of Virtue and Truth, to render useless their Disposition for great Things, and extinguish in them

them all Desire of signalizing themselves for Learning like the Men, by debarring them of the Means.

When one attends to the Manner in which the Defects of the Women are represented, it must shock one to think they are the Reflexions of reasonable Beings. If there is equal Reason to retaliate on the Side of the Women, the Accuser sins against natural Equity; if the Men are still worse, though blind to their own Defects, how thoughtless they must be to begin the Attack; if they are conscious of them, their Silence proclaims their Injustice, in censuring the less culpable. If the Women are more meritorious than the Men, the latter must own themselves ignorant, or envious in not acknowledging it. When a Person is more inclined to Virtue than Vice, the first is in some Measure an Apology for the latter, and when his Defects are irremovable, and he has not the Means of ridding himself of them (which is the Case with the Women) he rather merits our

Compassion than Contempt. In a Word, if these Defects are trifling, or only the Appearances of such, it is imprudent or malicious to take Notice of them; nevertheless this is the general Practice of the Men with respect to the Women.

It is pretended that they are timid, and incapable of defending themselves; that they are terrified at their very Shadow; that they are alarmed at the Cry of a Child; and they tremble at the Noise of the Wind. This is far from being the Case in general. There are Numbers of Women as valiant as the Men. Beside, Timidity is almost inseparable from Virtue; worthy People who are not disposed to injure any one, sensible of the Artifices of Man, cannot avoid being cautious, and even fearful. It is an universal Passion which no one is exempt from; every Body fears Death, and the Inconveniences of Life; the most powerful Princes dread the Rebellion of their Subjects, and the Invasion of their Enemies; and the most courageous
Soldier

Soldier is not without his Fears of being surprized.

Our Fears are proportion'd to the Strength we possess of defending ourselves; and it is culpable in none but those who are sufficiently powerful to repel all Attacks that may be made upon them; it would be as unreasonable to accuse a Judge, or a Man of Letters, entirely devoted to Study, who refused fighting a Duel, of Pusillanimity, as it would to censure a Soldier, who had made Arms his only Employment, for not engaging in a Dispute with a sage Philosopher.

The Manner in which Women are brought up, gives them Reason to dread every Thing. Devoid of Learning, they are exposed to all the Artillery of Logic and Sophistry; they have no Share in Exercises of Address and Defence. They find themselves necessitated to suffer with Impunity the Outrages of a Sex subject

to the greatest Extravagances, who look upon them with the utmost Contempt.

Wherefore Timidity in Women should not be regarded as a Fault, but as a reasonable Passion, for which they are indebted for that Modesty so peculiar to them, as well as the two greatest Advantages in Life; *an Inclination for Virtue*, and an *Estrangement from Vice*. These are solid Benefits, which Men with their Study and Learning, cannot acquire.

The Fear of Want is the most usual Source of Avarice. Men are not less subject to it than Women, and if a fair Account were stated, I sincerely believe that not only the Majority would be on the Side of the former, but also that their Avarice would appear of a worse Kind. As there is but a small Step between the two opposite Vices and Virtue which holds the Balance, one is frequently taken for the other, and Avarice is confounded with Praise-worthy Economy.

The

The same Action may be good and bad in different Persons; Circumstances decide its Merit. Women are deprived of every Means of making a Fortune by their Abilities; the Sciences and Employments are both shut upon them; therefore being less able to parry the Misfortunes and Inconveniences of Life, they must necessarily be more affected with them. It is not surprising that they should be careful of what they have got, since it is so difficult for them to acquire any more.

With respect to Credulity, if they acquiesce so readily to what is told them, it is the Effect of their Simplicity, which prevents their believing, that those who have Authority over them, should either be ignorant or self-interested; moreover it is a great Infringement upon Justice to accuse the Women of Credulity, when the Men are still more addicted to it. The most cunning Men are easily deceived by false Appearances; and frequently

quently their greatest Knowledge consists in a most servile and implicit Belief, though more extensive than that of the Women; I mean that they are no more learned than the Women, than by reason of their easy Assent to a greater Number of Things, of which they retain the Ideas, by dint of poring over them.

There are Men who think they greatly mortify the Sex, in telling them they are great Talkers; and they have much Reason to be displeased at so impertinent a Reproach. Their Bodies are so happily framed, that they preserve the most distinct Impressions of the Objects which strike them, they represent them without any Difficulty, and express themselves with an admirable Facility. Hence it is their Ideas being renovated at the slightest Signal, their Relations are one pleasing Concatination of Thought and Representation. They can never be accused with Justice of being Chatterers, but when they talk out of Season, and of Things they are unacquainted with.

But

But if the Men had an equal Volubility of Speech, how frequently (even still more than they are at present) might they be convicted of such Practices.

Curiosity is, perhaps, one of the greatest Faults the Men ascribe to the Women; and yet it would be difficult to decide in which Sex it most prevails. If the Extensiveness of the Men's Learning were to arbitrate, this Umpire would be very peremptory, and the Women's Ignorance would, in this respect, at least, prove a most persuasive Advocate. What renders Curiosity a Fault is the Disposition of the Person enquired of: When he is in a communicative Mood, he looks upon scarce any Question as impertinent; on the contrary, he is glad of every Opportunity of disburthening his Mind, or parading his Knowledge; but when in a sullen Temper every Sentence displeases, and Information as well as Query is disrelished.

When

When Curiosity is thus divested of its Criminality, the Women are rather to be commended than blamed for exercising it upon all Occasions, where Intrusion is avoided, and Importunity dismissed; for considering what small Means they have left of gaining a little Knowledge, how frequently their Intent is foil'd by applying to those as ignorant as themselves, and how often they are rebuked by those who interest themselves in retaining the Sex in that State of Simplicity they are, a Perseverance to endeavour at acquiring new Lights must appear the Effect of such Fortitude, as the Men can never arrive at.

The *Inconstancy* and *volatile Disposition* of Women, is another Accusation against them. There is nothing can give a Sanction to this Opinion but the supposed Superiority of the Men, and that Sex's dependant State: Comparison, which decides the Merit or Demerit of every Thing, not only refutes the Proposition, but places

places it in a stronger Point of Light, with respect to the Men. But they imagine they are allowed every Thing, and a Woman being once united to them, the Tie is to be indissoluble only on her Side, although in Equity and Reason it should be an equal Restraint to both.

If we would divest ourselves of Prejudice, and seriously reflect upon the Nature of ourselves, we should readily acquiesce that Mortality implied Inconstancy; that by the Structure of our Frames there was an indispensable Necessity for our being so. We judge of Objects, and conclude we love or hate them, only by Appearances, independant of ourselves: And these very Objects, in a small Revolution of Time, appear quite different to us, either from a change in them or in ourselves; indeed, the Poet goes so far as to say,

*New Passions, new Opinions still excite,
And what we like at Noon, despise at Night.*

But allowing for the Hyperbole, we well know, that in our Infancy we are quite indifferent to many Things, which a few Years after are the only Objects of our Attention; and this is observable in nothing more than in Love.

Now we have mentioned the tender Passion, we shall go a little farther, and observe, that if we are beloved, it is because we are thought amiable; or if disliked, because we appear disagreeable. We find Charms in a Person, after some Acquaintance, whom we at first thought distasteful; and being got thus far, it is but a short Transition to sympathize in in his Distress, and wish to relieve him—hence a mutual Flame.

The agitated State of Mind, by the Operation of contrary Inclinations, with respect to the same Object, plainly proves our Passions are constrained; and as a trivial Circumstance may excite Love, so may as slender a Cause destroy it. However,

Female Rights vindicated. III

ever, the Women have the Prudence to conceal their Disgust, and seldom testify to the World this Imperfection of their Nature; for that Object they have truly loved, they are scarce ever bereft of Esteem; Whereas the first Rupture on the Side of the Man is notified to the World by a female Rival; all Appearances are disregarded; and 'tis looked upon as a Crime to esteem a Woman he does not pretend to longer love.

When the Women are accused of being artful, it is rather complimenting their Sense, than attacking their Probity, even when they practise it by secret Ways, in order to arrive at their Ends. Capacity is requisite to discover these Means, and Address is necessary for putting them in Practice. Beside, Women's Schemes are but Counter-Plots of Intrigue, which they endeavour to execute in their own Defence. But the Artifices of Men are far different, as well in their Cause as Consequence; they generally affect Society, or the State, and are there-

fore more dangerous and universal. The Men have a Variety of Ways of deceiving, which the Women are debarred from, supposing their Inclinations instigated them thereto; having neither Posts, Employments, or general Traffic; they of Course have scarce any Power or Wealth, which are the grand Instruments of Machination, and therefore can only work with Rhetoric and Caresses, which being the most natural Means, are also the most easily circumvented.

To crown the Charge against the Sex, it is emphatically asserted, they are more malicious and mischievous than the Men. But let us come to the Proof; will any one endeavour to support, that the Women have done more Harm than the Men? The opposite is clearly manifest. It is from Malversation in high Offices; Misconduct in Commanders, and want of Integrity in Counsellors, that all public Calamities arise; from these then they are exempt.

When

When it is said the Women are more malicious than the Men; this can imply nothing more than that when they are disposed for Evil, they do it more artfully, and carry it further than the Men. For the sake of Argument we will agree to this. Will not the necessary Consequence tend to their Advantage? Being capable of doing much Mischief, supposes a great Share of Sense, and the Abilities for doing much Good. Therefore this Reproach can affect the Women no more than in accusing the Rich of being worse than the Poor, because they can be so; and the same Answer might serve for both. "If we have it in our Power to do a great deal of Harm, we have it equally in our Power to do a great deal of Good."

From this slight Discussion of the most notorious Faults that are imputed to the Women, it plainly appears that they are not so great as they are vulgarly imagined, and small as they are, they may

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be reasonably attributed to their bad Education, which being mended, their Faults would of course be corrected.

If Philosophers had made this their Rule of judging of the Sex, they would have spoke of them in a more reasonable Manner, and not fallen into such ridiculous Absurdities. But the greatest Part of the Ancients, as well as the Moderns, have built their Philosophy upon popular Prejudice, and being very ignorant of themselves, it is not surprizing they should have been so little acquainted with others. The Moderns, who are Slaves to Antiquity, have blindly embraced its Errors, and in nothing more than in their Opinions of Women. It may not be amiss to cite in this Place some of the most curious Thoughts of the Ancients upon this Head.

Plato, the Father of ancient Philosophy, thanked the Gods for three Favours conferr'd upon him, but most particularly for being born a Man, and not a Woman.

Woman. If he meant with respect to their present Situation, he was certainly in the Right; but there is Reason to surmise from the Doubt he often expressed, Whether Women should not be class'd in the Predicament of Beasts, that he gave this Preference from more ulterior Considerations: What Opinion must reasonable People entertain of such consummate Ignorance! With what Justice can the Appellation of *Divine* be given to so brutal a Sceptic?

His Disciple *Aristotle*, who still retains in the Schools the Name of the *Genius of Nature*, upon the Presumption that he was more conversant with her than any other Philosopher, pretends that *Women* are neither more or less than *Monsters*. Who dare dissent from the Authority of so great a Man? Yet if a Woman, however learned she might be, had wrote as much with respect to the Men, she would have soon lost her scholastic Credit, and it would have been thought a sufficient Refutation to have said, the

Author

Author was either *mad*, or a *Woman*. Her Assertion would nevertheless have had equal Foundation with that of *Aristotle*. Women are as ancient as Men, pretty near as numerous, and no Man is surpris'd at meeting them. To be a Monster, according to the Notion of the same Philosopher, it is necessary to have something extraordinary and surprising. Women have nothing of all that; they have always been made alike; always handsome, gay, and sprightly; and if they were not made like *Aristotle*, they might say *Aristotle* was not made like them.

The Disciples of this Philosopher, who lived in the Time of *Philo*, supported an Opinion no less ridiculous with respect to the Women, in imagining, after that Historian, that they were imperfect Men; doubtless this was because they are deficient in that Ornament of the Chin, a Beard — what else can be understood by it? The Sexes to be perfect should be just as they are. If one resembled the other, it would be no longer either of them. If
the

the Men are Fathers of the Women, the Women are Mothers of the Men, which renders them, at least, equal; and one might say, with as much Reason as these Philosophers, that *Men* are but imperfect *Women*.

Socrates, who was the Oracle of Antiquity for Morality, speaking of the Beauty of the Sex, compared it to a Temple built upon a Common-Sewer. This Thought must move the risible Muscles, if it does not affect the Stomach. There is Reason to believe that he judged of the Body of others by his own, or that of his Wife, who was a very Harpy, which made him detest her, and speak thus of her Sex in hopes of humbling her Pride, and making her submit to his Will; besides this, his own Ugliness, which was complete, did not a little excite him to abuse those endow'd with Beauty.

Diogenes, surnamed the Dog, by Reason of his Disposition to bite, seeing two Women

Women going along one Day talking together, he said to one of his Companions, "See there two Serpents, an Asp and a Viper, communicating their Venom to one another." This, to be sure, is a mighty curious Speech and worthy the Rank it holds in philosophical Sayings!

As for the pleasant, facetious *Democritus*, who loved to be merry, every Thing that he said must not be taken literally. He was very tall, and his Wife very little; and being asked one Day how he came to make such a disproportionate Match, he replied, with his usual good Humour, "When one is obliged to chuse, where there is nothing good to be had, the least is always best." If one had asked his Wife the same Question, she might with as much Reason have replied, "that as a great and a little Husband were much the same as to their Goodness, she had taken her's at Hap-hazard, for fear of getting the worst by chusing."

Cato,

Cato, that wise and severe Critic, frequently supplicated the Gods to pardon him, if he had been so imprudent as to trust any Secret to a Woman. The good Man had certainly always in his Head a famous Passage in the *Roman* History, which the Lovers of Antiquity are ever quoting, to shew the little Prudence and Reserve of the Women, and how natural it is for them to blab a Secret. A Child of twelve Years old, greatly solicited by his Mother to tell her the Resolutions of the Senate, where he had been, to appease her, said, it was resolved to give every Man several Wives. She immediately ran to her female Neighbours to concert Measures with them, and all the City knew it in less than half an Hour. I should be curious to know what a Husband would do in a State where the Women were Mistresses, upon hearing that it had been resolved in Council for every Woman to take half a Dozen Husbands? Doubtless he would not open his Lips about it.

Here

Here, then, are some of the greatest and most sublime Thoughts upon the Fair Sex of those whom the Learned look upon as Oracles; and what is diverting and ridiculous at the same Time is, that Men of the most grave Turn seriously repeat what these famous Ancients said frequently in Raillery. So true it is that Prejudice and Pre-occupation give rise to the greatest Errors amongst the highest, most reasonable and judicious of Men.

F I N I S.



